



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES  
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**June is Scoliosis Awareness Month**

*52 Weeks of Public Health Campaign Spotlight: Scoliosis*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (June 20, 2017) – As part of the 52 Weeks of Public Health (DPH) campaign, the Kentucky Department of Public Health within the Cabinet of Health and Family Services (CHFS) spotlights Scoliosis.

Scoliosis is a musculoskeletal disorder in which there is a sideways curvature of the spine, or back. People of all ages can have scoliosis, but adolescent idiopathic scoliosis (scoliosis of unknown cause) is the most common type and typically occurs after the age of 10. Girls are more likely than boys to have this type of scoliosis. Because scoliosis can run in families, a child who has a parent, brother, or sister with idiopathic scoliosis should be checked regularly for scoliosis by the family doctor. An x ray of the spine can confirm the diagnosis of scoliosis.

Many children who are sent to the doctor by a school scoliosis-screening program have very mild spinal curves that do not need treatment. When treatment is needed, the doctor may send the child to an orthopedic spine specialist.

Doctors can recommend the best treatment for each patient based on the patient's age, how much more he or she is likely to grow, the degree and pattern of the curve, and the type of scoliosis. The doctor may recommend observation, bracing, or surgery.

Although exercise programs have not been shown to affect the natural history of scoliosis, exercise is encouraged in patients with scoliosis to minimize any potential decrease in functional ability over time. "It is very important for all people, including those with scoliosis, to exercise and remain physically fit," according to Dr. Connie Gale White, Senior Deputy Commissioner for the Kentucky Department for Public Health. Girls have a higher risk than boys of developing osteoporosis (a disorder that results in weak bones that can break easily) later in life. The risk of osteoporosis can be reduced in women who exercise regularly all their lives. For both boys and girls, exercising and participating in sports can improve their general sense of well-being.

Throughout the planned 52 Weeks of Public Health promotion, DPH will spotlight a specific public health issue. Additional information about the campaign is available on the DPH website: <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/default.htm> and will be posted on the CHFS Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/kychfs> where Kentuckians are encouraged to like and share posts among their networks of friends.

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*